

*E quibus hi vacuas implent Sermonibus aures,
Hi narrata ferunt alio: mensuraque ficti
Crescit, & auditis aliquid novus adjicit autor,
Illic Credulitas, illic temerarius Error,
Vanaque Lætitia est, consternatique Timores,
Seditioque recens, dubioque autore susurri.*

I AM prevailed on, through the Importunity of Friends, to interrupt the Scheme I had begun in my last Paper, by an Essay upon the Art of *Political Lying*. We are told, *The Devil is the Father of Lyes*, and *was a Lyar from the beginning*; so that, beyond Contradiction, the Invention is old: And, which is more, his first Essay of it was purely *Political*, employed in undermining the Authority of his Prince, and seducing a third Part of the Subjects from their Obedience. For which he was driven down from Heaven, where (as *Milton* expresseth it) he had been VICEROY of a great *Western Province*; and forced to exercise his Talent in inferior Regions among *other fallen Spirits*, or *poor deluded Men*, whom he still daily tempts to *his own Sin*, and will ever do so till he be *chained in the bottomless Pit*.

BUT although the Devil be the Father of *Lyes*, he seems, like

other great Inventors, to have lost much of his Reputation, by the continual Improvements that have been made upon him.

WHO first reduced *Lying* into an Art, and adapted it to *Politicks*, is not so clear from History; although I have made some diligent Enquiries: I shall therefore consider it only according to the modern System, as it hath been cultivated these twenty Years past in the Southern Part of our own Island.

THE Poets tell us, That after the Giants were overthrown by the Gods, the *Earth* in revenge produced her last Offspring, which was *Fame*. And the Fable is thus interpreted; That when Tumults and Seditions are quieted, Rumours and false Reports are plentifully spread through a Nation. So that by this Account, *Lying* is the last Relief of a *routed, earth-born, rebellious Party* in a State. But here, the Moderns have made great Additions, applying this Art to the gaining of Power, and preserving it, as well as revenging themselves after they have lost it: As the same Instruments are made use of by Animals to feed themselves when they are hungry, and bite those that tread upon them.

BUT the same Genealogy cannot always be admitted for *Political Lying*; I shall therefore desire to refine upon it, by adding some Circumstances of its Birth and Parents. A *Political Lye* is sometimes born out of a discarded Statesman's Head, and thence delivered to be nursed and dandled by the *Rabble*. Sometimes it is produced a Monster, and *licked* into Shape; at other Times it comes into the World compleatly formed, and is spoiled in the *licking*. It is often born an Infant in the regular Way, and requires Time to mature it: And often it sees the Light in its full Growth, but dwindles away by Degrees. Sometimes it is of noble Birth; and sometimes the Spawn of a *Stock-jobber*. *Here*, it screams aloud at opening the Womb; and *there*, it is delivered with a *Whisper*. I know a *Lye* that now disturbs half the Kingdom with its Noise, which although too proud and great at present to own its Parents, I can remember in its *Whisper-hood*. To conclude the Nativity of this Monster; when it comes into the World without a *Sting*, it is still-born; and whenever it loses its *Sting*, it dies.

No Wonder, if an Infant so miraculous in its Birth, should be destined for great Adventures: And accordingly we see it hath

been the *Guardian Spirit* of a *prevailing Party* for almost twenty Years. It can conquer Kingdoms without Fighting, and sometimes with the Loss of a Battle: It gives and resumes Employments; can sink a Mountain to a Mole-hill, and raise a Mole-hill to a Mountain; hath presided for many Years at Committees of Elections; can wash a *Black-a-moor* white; make a Saint of an Atheist, and a Patriot of a Profligate; can furnish *Foreign Ministers* with Intelligence; and raise or let fall the Credit of the Nation. This Goddess flies with a huge *Looking-glass* in her Hands to dazzle the Crowd, and make them see, according as she turns it, their Ruin in their Interest, and their Interest in their Ruin. In this Glass you will behold your best Friends clad in Coats powdered with *Flower-de-Luce's* and *Triple Crowns*; their Girdles hung round with *Chains*, and *Beads*, and *Wooden Shoes*: And your worst Enemies adorned with the Ensigns of *Liberty*, *Property*, *Indulgence*, *Moderation*, and a *Cornucopia* in their Hands. Her large Wings, like those of a flying Fish, are of no Use but while they are moist; she therefore dips them in *Mud*, and soaring aloft scatters it in the Eyes of the Multitude, flying with great Swiftmess; but at every Turn is forced to stoop in *dirty Ways* for new Supplies.

I HAVE been sometimes thinking, if a Man had the Art of the *Second Sight* for seeing *Lyes*, as they have in *Scotland* for seeing Spirits; how admirably he might entertain himself in this Town; to observe the different Shapes, Sizes and Colours, of those Swarms of *Lyes* which buz about the Heads of *some People*, like Flies about a Horse's Ears in Summer: Or those Legions hovering every Afternoon in *Exchange-Alley*, enough to darken the Air; or over a Club of discontented *Grande'es*, and thence sent down in Cargoes to be scattered at Elections.

THERE is one essential Point wherein a *Political Lyar* differs from others of the Faculty; That he ought to have but a short Memory, which is necessary according to the various Occasions he meets with every Hour, of differing from himself, and swearing to both Sides of a Contradiction, as he finds the Persons disposed, with whom he hath to deal. In describing the Virtues and Vices of Mankind, it is convenient, upon every Article, to have some eminent Person in our Eye, from whence we copy

our Description. I have strictly observed this Rule; and my Imagination this Minute represents before me a certain * *Great Man* famous for this Talent, to the constant Practice of which he owes his twenty Years Reputation of the most skilful Head in *England*, for the Management of nice Affairs. The Superiority of his Genius consists in nothing else but an inexhaustible Fund of *Political Lyes*, which he plentifully distributes every Minute he speaks, and by an unparallelled Generosity forgets, and consequently contradicts the next half Hour. He never yet considered whether any Proposition were True or False, but whether it were convenient for the present Minute or Company to affirm or deny it; so that if you think to refine upon him, by interpreting every Thing he says, as we do Dreams by the contrary, you are still to seek, and will find your self equally deceived, whether you believe or no: The only Remedy is to suppose that you have heard some inarticulate Sounds, without any Meaning at all. And besides, that will take off the Horror you might be apt to conceive at the Oaths wherewith he perpetually Tags both ends of every *Proposition*: Although at the same Time, I think, he cannot with any Justice be taxed for Perjury, when he invokes *God* and *Christ*; because he hath often fairly given publick Notice to the World, that he believes in neither.

SOME People may think that such an Accomplishment as this, can be of no great Use to the Owner or his Party, after it hath been often practised, and is become notorious; but they are widely mistaken: Few *Lyes* carry the Inventor's Mark; and the most prostitute Enemy to Truth may spread a thousand without being known for the Author. Besides, as the vilest Writer hath his Readers, so the greatest *Lyar* hath his Believers; and it often happens, that if a *Lye* be believed only for an Hour, it hath done its Work, and there is no farther Occasion for it. *Falshood flies*, and *Truth* comes *limping* after it; so that when Men come to be undeceived, it is too late, the Jest is over, and the Tale has had its Effect: Like a Man who has thought of a good Repartee, when the Discourse is changed, or the Company

* *The late Earl of Wharton.*

parted: Or, like a Physician who hath found out an infallible Medicine after the Patient is dead.

CONSIDERING that natural Disposition in many Men to *Lye*, and in Multitudes to *Believe*; I have been perplexed what to do with that Maxim, so frequent in every Bodies Mouth, That *Truth will at last prevail*. Here, has this Island of ours, for the greatest Part of twenty Years lain under the Influence of such Counsels and Persons, whose Principle and Interest it was to corrupt our Manners, blind our Understandings, drain our Wealth, and in Time destroy our Constitution both in Church and State; and we at last were brought to the very Brink of Ruin; yet by the Means of perpetual Misrepresentations, have never been able to distinguish between our Enemies and Friends. We have seen a great Part of the Nation's Money got into the Hands of those, who by their Birth, Education and Merit, could pretend no higher than to wear our Liveries. While others, who by their Credit, Quality and Fortune, were only able to give Reputation and Success to the Revolution, were not only laid aside, as dangerous and useless; but loaden with the Scandal of *Jacobites*, Men of *Arbitrary Principles*, and *Pensioners to France*; while Truth, who is said to *lie in a Well*, seemed now to be buried there under a heap of Stones. But I remember it was a usual Complaint among the *Whigs*, that the Bulk of Landed-Men was not in their Interests, which some of the Wisest looked on as an ill Omen; and we saw it was with the utmost Difficulty that they could preserve a Majority, while the Court and Ministry were on their Side; till they had learned those admirable Expedients for deciding Elections, and influencing distant Boroughs, by *powerful Motives* from the City. But all this was meer Force and Constraint, however upheld by most dextrous Artifice and Management; until the People began to apprehend their *Properties*, their *Religion*, and the *Monarchy* itself in Danger; then we saw them greedily laying hold on the first Occasion to interpose. But of this mighty Change in the Dispositions of the People, I shall discourse more at large in some following Paper; wherein I shall endeavour to undeceive or discover those deluded or deluding Persons, who hope or pretend, it is only a short Madness in the Vulgar, from which they may soon re-

cover. Whereas, I believe, it will appear to be very different in its Causes, its Symptoms, and its Consequences; and prove a great Example to illustrate the Maxim I lately mentioned, That *Truth* (however sometimes late) *will at last prevail*.